

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Joe Courtney today released the following statement after President Obama's announcement that he is drawing down troops in Afghanistan:

"After a decade of American military presence in Afghanistan, the President's announcement today that he is drawing down troops is a positive step. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I have been closely involved in the oversight of the war and have traveled to Afghanistan twice. From that experience, I believe it is imperative that the reduction and the remaining troops' presence support our clearly-stated national security goals and convey to the Afghan government that the responsibility for their country's security now lies with them.

"I also believe that additional reductions beyond tonight's announcement are warranted before the end of 2012, and I will continue to urge President Obama and our military leaders to do so at every possible opportunity.

"In Iraq today, we are witnessing a successful draw down that should serve as a model in Afghanistan. Administration officials today testified before the House Armed Services Committee that by the end of the year, 46,000 troops will leave Iraq, and only 157 servicemen and women will remain on the ground. President Obama's announcement today puts Afghanistan on a similar path to a responsible draw down. I will continue working to ensure that our remaining mission in Afghanistan is limited in scope, focused in its goals, and moving rapidly towards its conclusion."